

Story 1353 (1969 Tape 5)

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The Judge's Reason for Dancing

Once there was a man who had been very rich most of his life, but then his fortune changed, and he became very poor. One day as he was wandering about looking for work, he came to a city. Being very hungry, he went to a food store and said, "Give me just ten para¹ worth of bread, ten para worth of cheese, and 100 para worth of olives. Also, give me some water to drink with this food." After he had eaten, this now poor man asked the storekeeper to tell him what the name of that city was, but the storekeeper refused to do so. At first they argued about this, and then they began to fight. In this fight, they hurt each other considerably, and they finally decided to take the matter to court.

As they were going to the court, they met a man with a kemençe.² The kemençe player looked at them and saw how

¹The para was worth 1/40 of a kuruş, and the kuruş was worth 1/100 of a lira. By the 1970s, devaluation of Turkish money had reached the point where the kuruş could no longer be used as a monetary unit. By that time the para had long since disappeared. At the moment this tale is being processed, the U.S. dollar is worth 5,700 liras, and so even the individual lira has become virtually worthless in 1992.

²The kemençe resembles a small violin and is actually

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battered they were. He asked, "What happened to you?" When the kemençe player learned of their quarrel, he decided to follow them to court, all the while playing a tune upon his instrument

At the court the judge asked both the plaintiff and the defendant for their evidence. All the while these two men were explaining their quarrel to the judge, the kemençe player kept playing loudly. The judge soon started to dance, and both the poor man and the storekeeper were confused by this. They asked the judge why he was dancing.

The judge answered, "This is the noisiest hearing I have ever had in my court. That is why I am dancing."

thought by some to be the ancestor of the violin. Played with a bow, the kemençe has three wire strings.